

Sermon Mark S. Aites

WANTING TO BE LIKE THE NATIONS AROUND US

(Based on Lecture by Roy Deaver, *10th Annual Denton Lectureship*)

TEXT: 1 SAMUEL 8:4-10,19-20

INTRODUCTION:

1. Read **Deut. 12:30-32**.
2. New Testament admonition: *And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him (Col. 3:17)*.
3. These passages should remind us that what we do in the Lord's church today, must be only that which is expressly authorized in God's Word.
4. All that we do and say in our worship before God must be according to the Divine pattern.
5. At times, we can turn to the Old Testament, and see some principles and stories which should concern us today as we seek to make application (**Rom. 15:4**).
6. To Corinth: *Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come (1 Cor. 10:11)*.
7. The biblical account in **1 Sam. 8** provides us with a much needed lesson today, as we learn of Israel's mistake in their desire to be like the nations around them.

DISCUSSION:

I. ISRAEL WAS A NATION OF DISCONTENT.

- A. From the time of their departure from Egypt, Israel demonstrated a pattern of discontent.
 1. In **Exod. 17**, they pitched their tents in Rephidim and murmured against Moses:
Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst? (Exod. 17:3).
 2. In **Num. 11**, the people complained about the food. God provided for them manna and quail, and the Bible says while the food was still in their mouths, God smote them with plagues for their lust -- apparently they were gorging themselves (**11:33**).
 3. When the spies were sent into the land of Canaan, and their evil report was made known, the people said, *Let us make a captain, and let us return unto Egypt (Num. 14:4)*.
 4. When Korah and his followers rebelled against the leadership of Moses and Aaron, the people spoke against Moses and Aaron: *Ye have killed the people of the Lord (Num. 16:41)*.
 5. The incident in **1 Sam. 4** is another example of this problem.
- B. The sin of discontent is a serious matter. Serious because what it can lead.
 1. For example: in **1 Sam. 13**, we are told the story of how Israel was scattered because of their fear of the Philistines.
 2. Samuel did not arrive at the appointed time, so Saul offered sacrifices

- without him.
3. When Samuel arrived he informed Saul that because of his hasty action, the kingdom would be stripped from him (**1 Sam. 13:14**).
- D. The sin of discontent is also a serious matter for the Lord's church.
1. Sometimes we may do and say things that we should not.
 2. Sometimes we may murmur as the children of Israel did out of discontent.
- E. Israel's discontent led them to an action which was not in accordance with God's will.

II. THEY LOOKED IN THE WRONG DIRECTION.

- A. Israel did not look upward to God, but rather outward to man.
1. They wanted to be patterned after the nations around them. They wanted to be just like them.
 2. In order for that to be, they needed an earthly king.
- B. Israel made a critical error in that they already had a King, but because of their outward look instead of an upward look, they rejected God in favor of a man to be king.
1. *Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep My covenant then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto Me a **kingdom of priests, and an holy nation**. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel (**Exod. 19:5-6**).*
*And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me, that **I should reign over them** (**1 Sam. 8:7**).*
 2. Israel's failure was in the fact that they rejected God as their king in favor of a man **just** so they could be like the nations around them.
 3. It seems apparent from the text that they did not want to be a peculiar people.
- C. We see that even today in the kingdom of God.
1. Some do not like the idea of being a peculiar people. They do not want to be different from the religious world.
 2. Instead of looking upward to God, and to strictly adhere to His will and way, they instead look outward to their religious neighbors and want to be just like them.
 3. The denominations use instrumental music, so they want to also; ignoring the fact that there is no authorization for its usage in the Lord's church.
 4. The denominations celebrate religious holidays, with their observances of Easter and the birth of Christ on Dec. 25th, when in fact the early church had no such observances.
 6. Paul himself wrote against the practice of the observance of holy days as being binding upon others (**Col. 2:16**).

7. Many of the denominations teach salvation by faith only, when in fact the Bible plainly says, *Ye see that how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only* (**James 2:24**).
 - 1) The Word of God teaches the necessity of repentance, confession of Christ, and baptism for the remission of sins (**Acts 2:38; Rom. 10:9-10**).
 - 2) The apostle Paul even likens the process of becoming a Christian to the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (**Rom. 6:1ff**), plainly explaining the necessity of being buried in baptism, and being raised to walk in newness of life.
 - 3) *For ye are all the sons of God by faith...* (**Gal. 3:26-27**). Consider the reverse, to not be baptized, is to not put on Christ. Those who have not been baptized have not yet put on Christ.
 - 4) Without Christ they are lost (**John 14:6**).
- D. There is too much of a desire today in the body of Christ to look outward and not upward.
- E. We must be a peculiar people; not just for the sake of being different, but for the sake of doing and following a thus saith the Lord.
 1. Peter: *But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light* (**1 Pet. 2:9**).
 2. Isaiah: *To the law and to the testimony: if they if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them* (**Isa. 8:20**).
 3. *If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen* (**1 Pet. 4:11**).
 4. God is glorified when we preach the truth; when we preach, a thus saith the Lord; and when we adhere to the divine pattern for worship, salvation, and Christian living.
- F. To please God we must look upward to Him and not to the religious world and to our religious neighbors, and not to their pattern of things.

III.ISRAEL'S FAILURE TO CONSULT GOD.

- A. I believe some credit needs to be extended to Israel, in that they did recognize that they had a problem.
 1. Samuel was old, his sons were wicked, the people were becoming more rebellious and aggressive, God's law was not being respected, and they were facing increasing pressure from the neighboring nations.
 2. The elders of Israel recognized that this was an unacceptable situation; but **they greatly erred in assuming that they had the right to change things without consulting with God.**
 3. Bro. Deaver rightly notes: "They simply made up their minds and set out to bring about the desired change. . . They sinned in their disregard for and

- rejection of God's system of government for them. They sinned in their rejection of Samuel, God's appointed authoritative representative and spokesman, God's prophet. They sinned in demanding the kind of king that **they** wanted without regard to the kind of king which **God** desired for them...It seems that there has always been the tendency upon the part of human beings to 'come up' with a better plan than God's plan. The fact is, these unauthorized humans plans **never have worked**, and God's plan **has always worked.**" (Roy Deaver, 10th Annual Denton Lectureship)
- B. Today we see the same kind of sin, in that men will set up things according to their idea, without ever consulting the Divine standard.
1. God has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness (**2 Pet. 1:3**).
 2. **2 Tim. 3:16-17**
 3. It is not as though God does not tell us or fail to provide us with His will; it is simply that man would rather try to improve upon what God has written.
 4. **2 John 9-11**

IV. THE FRUIT OF THE PROBLEM.

- A. Israel got their king, and in their efforts to be like the nations around them, paid a heavy price.
1. **Read 1 Sam. 8:10-18.**
 2. Not only did Israel face this burden, but the fruit of their sin is further evident in those that were still discontent.
 3. **1 Sam. 10:27**, after Saul's selection: *But the children of Belial said, How shall this man save us? and they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace.*
- B. Discontentment breeds discontentment.
1. Paul warned: *...know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?* (**1 Cor. 5:6**).
 2. The danger here that needs to be seen and emphasized, is that once you start down the path away from God the sin continues to compound; and there seems to be no end to the digression.
 3. I would to God that some of my brethren would see this point.
- C. I want to borrow a moment from bro. Deaver some documented quotes that preachers have made who started down the wrong path.
1. "If Mrs. Noah had wanted the master bedroom paneled with pecan timber there would have been nothing wrong with it!"
 - 1) But the Bible plainly tells us that God commanded that the ark be built with only one type of wood -- Gopher wood.
 - 2) *Make thee an ark of gopher wood...* (**Gen. 6:14**).
 2. "I will no longer be concerned about what the Bible says, I will be concerned only about where the Holy Spirit leads me."
 - 1) But concern for what the Bible says is a must! Jesus tells us that it will be the Divine standard in the day of judgment.

- 2) *He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken shall judge him in the last day (John 12:48).*
- 3) And further, the only way the Holy Spirit guides Christians today is through the written Word. (cf. *Sword of the Spirit Eph. 6:17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21*).
3. And one more, from a very prominent preacher in Nashville, TN:
"If I were in a congregation where the will of that congregation -- the decision of the elders -- was that the instrument was going to be used next week, I wouldn't mount the pulpit and condemn them and divide the church. "
(8/14/85)
 - 1) While one must accept the necessity of unity in the church (**Eph. 4**), it none the less must not be achieved at any cost!
 - 2) Even if many in the congregation want the instrument, the preacher has the God-given responsibility to preach and uphold the truth! (**2 Tim. 4:2**)
 - 3) Therefore, the instrument must be opposed, as it is an addition to what God has authorized.
- D. Long ago the prophet Jeremiah revealed God's admonition: *Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls... (Jer. 6:16).*

CONCLUSION:

1. The goal, my friends, is not to pattern our lives and our worship, salvation, and Christian living, after the denominations about us.
2. **Col. 3:17**